

Anthony Wayne

Man of Action



*Waynesborough, the Birthplace
of Anthony Wayne*

ANTHONY WAYNE was one of the most colorful of all the commanders-in-chief that the Army of the United States has ever had. Some have acclaimed him as the first native-born military genius, whose greatness as an organizer of troops and as a military planner is only now beginning to be recognized at its full worth. Because of his brilliant exploits during the American Revolution, he was regarded as a military hero in his own time, but his greatest achievement came after 1792. With a new American army, the Legion of the United States, which he organized and drilled, Wayne defeated hostile Indians of the Northwest Territory at Fallen Timbers in 1794, and then made peace with them at Greenville in 1795, putting an end to Indian raids and opening Ohio and northwestern Pennsylvania to settlement.

Born on January 1, 1745, in Chester County, Pennsylvania, Anthony was the only son of Isaac and Elizabeth (Iddings) Wayne and was named for his grandfather, Captain Anthony Wayne, a veteran of Marlborough's campaigns. His birthplace, the family home called Waynesborough, built by his grandfather in 1724, still stands about six miles from the borough of Wayne and about three miles from Paoli. Young Anthony's school record was far from outstanding. The most remarkable incident of his school days was a sham battle in which Wayne and his classmates re-enacted the capture of Fort Ticonderoga in 1759. He was punished for this escapade, but it showed his awareness of what was going on in

the world as well as his inclination toward a military career. In school he learned enough mathematics to make him a competent surveyor and in 1765, when he was twenty years old, a land company sent him to look after the surveying of lands in Nova Scotia. During the winter he returned to Philadelphia and married Mary Penrose, the daughter of a Philadelphia merchant. The Nova Scotia land venture failed in 1766, and Wayne went back to Chester County to run the family farm and tannery in partnership with his father. His father's death in 1775 made him a man of means and position.

Despite his wealth and comfortable situation, Anthony Wayne did not hesitate when the issues leading to the American Revolution were drawn. In his county he became a leader of the people who objected to British efforts to tighten control over the colonies. He presided over committees in his county which framed resolutions of protest against the British coercive acts and enforced the agreement against the importation of British goods. In 1775 he represented Chester County in the Pennsylvania General Assembly. Finally, on January 3, 1776, he accepted a commission as colonel of the Fourth Pennsylvania Battalion and began his military career.

Anthony Wayne has been called the "trouble shooter of the Revolution" by a recent biographer, Harry Emerson Wildes. This phrase well describes his services in the Continental Army. He seemed to be everywhere at once—recruiting, drilling, disciplining, fighting, and raising sup-

plies. Difficult assignments, insuperable tasks, dangerous feats were the stock in trade of this energetic and self-reliant soldier. The nickname, "Mad Anthony," which is said to have originated in the drunken babbling of a disgruntled soldier, reflects his quick temper. Wayne was impetuous and swift to action, but he was not rash or foolhardy. As a commander he was cautious, and even his most glamorous deeds were based upon careful and painstaking plans.

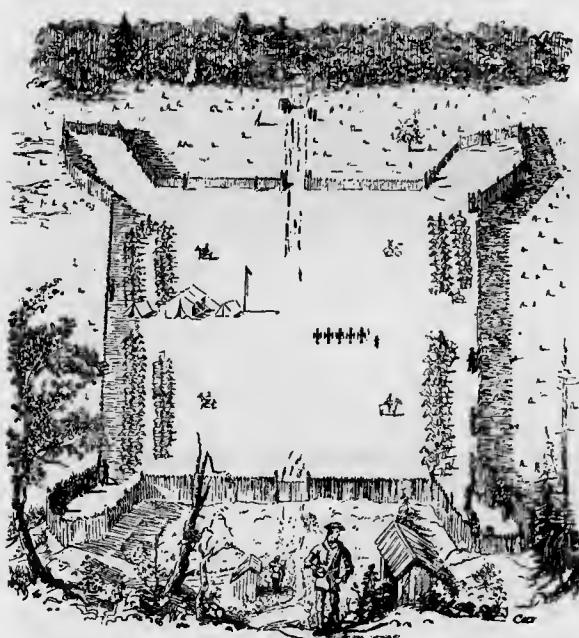
In the spring of 1776 Wayne and his battalion went with the Pennsylvania brigade to reinforce the Canadian expedition, through which Congress had hoped to gain another colony for the American cause. By his personal bravery and leadership Wayne held his troops together to cover the retreat of the American army after the defeat at Three Rivers on the St. Lawrence. Congress abandoned the effort to win Canada, and Wayne was placed in command of Fort Ticonderoga. Here he had for the first time the thankless task of maintaining discipline among troops from various states who were disinclined to follow the orders of a Pennsylvania commander. Commanding Fort Ticonderoga was not as enjoyable as his childhood game of fighting for it. In February, 1777, he was made a brigadier gen-

eral, and in April he left Ticonderoga to join Washington at Morristown, New Jersey, and take command of the Pennsylvania Line.

After a period of drilling and training, during which Wayne showed his customary concern for the proper equipment and uniforming of his men, the Pennsylvania Line fought in the campaign against the British occupation of Philadelphia in 1777. After the British army landed in Maryland and marched north, Wayne and his men were with the American army which attempted to stop them at Brandywine Creek on September 11. His troops held the center of the defense at Chadd's Ford. The American army, however, was outflanked by a British force which crossed the Brandywine higher up, and in the fierce fighting which followed Wayne's troops held the stream crossing until the rest of the army was out of danger. Washington retired north of the Schuylkill River and sent Wayne to circle around and harass the British in order to delay their advance on Philadelphia. This led to the greatest disaster of Wayne's military career.

In an attack before dawn on September 20, the British fell upon his force of 1,500 men encamped at Paoli, not far from his birthplace. The British had learned the position of his camp from Tory spies. Wayne himself was warned by an old farmer of the approach of the British but not soon enough to get his men completely ready. The British moved up while it was still dark and slaughtered more than two hundred men before Wayne could get his forces organized to fight a rear-guard action. Because of the number killed by the cold steel of bayonets, this affair was known as the "Paoli Massacre." Although Wayne kept his head in the midst of confusion and gave the proper orders to get the rest of his men away safely, he was later accused of negligence. He asked for a court-martial, which acquitted him unanimously and called him "an active, brave and vigilant officer." In the career of almost every great military leader, similar disasters can be found, caused by sheer bad luck or an unforeseen combination of circumstances, but the measure of Wayne's greatness was his ability to meet disaster.

The British had occupied Philadelphia after the Battle of Brandywine. Washington planned a surprise attack on the elements of the British forces stationed at Germantown, five miles from



General Wayne's encampment at Greenville

the city. The Americans failed of success in this Battle of Germantown, October 4, 1777, because the stubborn British defense of the Chew House enabled them to get reinforcements in time. Again, Wayne and his troops were the rear guard covering the retreat of the American army. During the bitter winter at Valley Forge, Wayne kept "the esteem and confidence" of his men and led foraging expeditions to gather grain and cattle to feed the army. On one occasion in southern New Jersey, he and the Polish general, Count Casimir Pulaski, with six hundred men attacked and frightened away a British force of four thousand. When word came to Valley Forge in early June, 1778, that the British were leaving Philadelphia and moving across New Jersey to New York City, Wayne and his Pennsylvanians were among the first to leave the winter encampment in pursuit of the enemy, and they had an important part in the Battle of Monmouth on June 28, the occasion when Mary Hays, the wife of a Pennsylvania soldier, gained the nickname of "Molly Pitcher."

In the spring of 1779 Wayne was placed in command of a separate corps of light infantry, which was formed of picked units from various states. With this corps on July 16, 1779, he carried out his most famous exploit, the surprise and capture of the British post at Stony Point on the Hudson River. Cannon, military stores, and more than five hundred prisoners were captured with this fort. Congress presented a medal to him for this victory. In 1780 his corps was stationed in the lower Hudson Valley, to hinder the British in New York City from gathering cattle and other supplies. When Benedict Arnold turned traitor and there was danger that West Point might fall to the British, Wayne marched his men sixteen miles at night over mountainous country in four hours and prevented the loss of this important post. The Pennsylvania troops mutinied in December, 1780, because of grievances over pay and term of service. Wayne helped to restore order and persuaded the Pennsylvania government to take care of their complaints.

In 1781 Wayne recruited new Pennsylvania troops and served under Lafayette in the Yorktown campaign against the British under Lord Cornwallis. During this service in Virginia on the lower James River, Wayne was ordered to attack what was supposedly only a detachment of



The Anthony Wayne Blockhouse at Erie

the British army, but which was really Cornwallis' entire army. In a seemingly hopeless situation, outnumbered nearly ten to one, Wayne ordered a charge into the British army, a bold move which was so unexpected that his men got safely away. This battle at Green Springs, July 6, 1781, was the most startling success of his career.

After the Yorktown campaign had been successfully concluded by the surrender of the main British army, Wayne was sent to Georgia where the British, Loyalists, and hostile Indians were still virtually in control. As his forces and supplies were inadequate, his service there was a series of disappointments, but he held the field, and defeated the Creek Indians in June, 1782. On July 12 his troops marched into Savannah as the British army sailed away, and after that he helped to restore order in that war-ravaged state.

In 1783 he retired from the army with the brevet rank of major-general.

Wayne's civilian life from 1783 to 1792 was less happy than his military career had been. The State of Georgia granted him an estate for his Revolutionary services; he ran into debt to improve it and lost it by foreclosure. He ventured into politics again both in Pennsylvania and Georgia without much success. In Pennsylvania he served in the General Assembly and in the Council of Censors, where his party failed in an attempt to revise the State Constitution. He was elected to Congress from Georgia, but in a few months lost his seat because of charges of irregularity in the election.

The treaty of peace with Great Britain in 1783 had left some unfinished business, the actual establishment of United States authority over the western lands. Although by the treaty the territory south of the Great Lakes was ceded to the United States, it was actually held by unfriendly Indians whom the British encouraged to resist the advance of American settlement, in the hope of creating an Indian buffer state between the United States and Canada. The United States tried to bring these Indians under control and to open the Northwest Territory to settlement, first by peaceful means through treaties, and later by military expeditions. These efforts collapsed in 1791, when an army under General Arthur St. Clair was seriously defeated.

President Washington decided both to reopen negotiations for peace with the western Indians and to build an army capable of imposing United States authority if the peace negotiations failed. To carry out these plans, Anthony Wayne was appointed as major-general in 1792 to command a new American army, called the Legion of the United States. He set up a training camp at Legionville, present-day Ambridge, Pennsylvania, and drilled and trained his soldiers to create a reliable and effective force. Cornplanter, the famous Seneca leader, tried to make peace between the United States and the western Indians at some risk of his life, for Wayne worried about

his "safe return" in 1792. In March, 1793, Cornplanter visited Legionville and urged Wayne to hold back his army until United States commissioners could talk with the western Indians, and Wayne agreed in accordance with Washington's plans.

The failure of these negotiations was Wayne's signal to move in the fall of 1793. Although he had been restless about delay, he advanced slowly, building roads and forts, making sure of his supplies, and sending out scouts. The next summer, he advanced into the heart of hostile territory, building more forts. About fifteen miles up the Maumee River from present Toledo, Ohio, Wayne's army finally met the main force of the Indians not far from the British post called Fort Miamis, and defeated them in the Battle of Fallen Timbers, August 20, 1794. This battle, together with the British refusal to help their allies, led to the submission of the Indians at the Treaty of Greenville in August, 1795.

Meanwhile, Jay's Treaty settled the existing disputes with the British, who agreed to withdraw from the posts on United States territory which they had been holding since the Revolution. In 1796 Wayne received orders to occupy these posts. On his return from a triumphal visit to Detroit, he landed at the new Pennsylvania fort at Presque Isle (Erie). There he fell ill and died on December 15, 1796, in the northwest blockhouse of Fort Presque Isle. He was buried at the foot of the flagpole of the fort, but in 1809 his son removed his bones to Radnor churchyard, Chester County. A replica of the original blockhouse stands on the site of his first grave on the grounds of the Pennsylvania Soldiers and Sailors Home at Erie.

Today this great and colorful soldier is remembered in numerous place names throughout the United States and especially in Pennsylvania and the states formed from the Northwest Territory. In Pennsylvania alone, a county, nine townships, and the boroughs of Wayne, Waynesboro, and Waynesburg bear his name, and fifteen other states have Wayne Counties.